ASA DI VAR

BY

TEJA SINGH, M. A.,

FORMERLY PROFESSOR OF HISTORY,
KHALSA COLLEGE, AMRITSAR.

Published by

...rdwara Parbandhak Committee,
AMRITSAR.

80 N.P.

੧ੳ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਸਹਾਇ Gulzara Singh Bhuiji

ASA DI VAR

OR

GURU NANAK'S ODE

IN THE ASA MEASURE,

RENDERED INTO ENGLISH & ANNOTATED

BY

TEJA SINGH, M. A.,

FORMERLY PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, KHALSA COLLEGE, AMRITSAR.

(With the Author's Permission)

September 1957.........2,000 *Copies.*

Printed by S. Ravel Singh, Secy. (Trusts), S. G. P. C. at
The Gurdwara Printing Press, Ramsar Road, Amritsar.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page.
Introduction	1
Synopsis	33
Translation ...	57
Notes ...	121

INTRODUCTION

A VAR or ode is a heroic measure famous in the Punjab, a land of war and heroes. With the large though unified scope of its theme and the wide and thrilling sweep of its music, this form of lyric is best suited to rouse the martial spirit in men and steel them in the face of danger. Recounting the mighty deeds of heroes, it is sung by bards before armies marching to battle, or with the lyre and tabor is made to enliven the parties of great men with the praise of their ancestors. It is generally tragic or dithyrambic, and the music sad but moving.

The Sikh Gurus took up this measure, as they did other similar measures of their native land, for their

own religious purposes. There are twenty-two such odes in the Holy Granth, set to seventeen different kinds of music. Among them is one, called the Coronation Ode in *Ramkali*, composed piece by piece, as the occasion arose, by two Mohammedan bards, Satta and Balwand, in praise of the first five Gurus. The stanzas in honour of Guru Nanak and Guru Angad were sung in the presence of the latter, and the others at the installation ceremony of those Gurus to whom they refer. These odes were sung in Sikh congregations by especially-appointed bards who were well-versed in the art of music and knew the particular tunes to which such compositions were to be sung. As much of the spirit and the effect depended on the proper handling of the music, the Gurus were very careful in preserving it. Guru Arjan, who compiled the sacred compositions into the Holy Book, set each piece to its own music; and, when after some time there

appeared a danger of the far-flung congregations forgetting the complicate music of some of the odes, Guru Hargobind affixed the proper tunes to them. There are nine such tunes, each of them being after some ode of a heroic theme, well-known at the time but now almost wholly forgotten. There may still be found here and there a stray old minstrel, with a rebeck, who could fairly reproduce the tunes to which these odes were originally sung; but, if our present neglectful attitude towards music continues, they will be lost to us for ever.

Asa-di-Var, or the Ode in the *Asa* measure, is one of the three Punjabi odes of Guru Nanak found in the Holy Granth. It forms the daily morning service of the Sikh congregations, and being in *Asa* is sung at the early dawn. It consists of *pauris* and *shlokas*, which I have chosen to call stanzas and staves. The stanzaic part is the essential part of the Ode, the

staves being added to explain and introduce the stanzas. In Guru Nanak's time it consisted of twenty-four stanzas and forty-six staves, all of Guru Nanak. Then in the time of Guru Angad, or after, fourteen more staves were added from the compositions of Guru Angad. In spite of the passages being complete in themselves and some of them selected from other places, the whole is very artistically arranged, and in the method, sequence, and coherence of thought it is as perfect as the *Japji*. The stanzas express the ideas in general terms, while the staves illustrate them in descriptive terms, adducing examples from the particular customs and views prevailing at the time To give a point to the main idea in a stanza, the last line is short and epigramatic.

In the construction of its music it resembles somewhat the ancient choral ode in Greek, the stave corresponding to

the strophe and the stanza to the anti-strophe. The staves are sung in solo and the stanza in chorus, the stanza being repeated again in recitativo. The staves singing is spontaneous, and anybody from the audience can bear a part in it. Usually one verse is sung by a person at a time, and then another takes up the tune. In this way when the staves are over, the fixed choir takes up the stanza, which is repeated again recitatively by one man in a clear and distinct intonation, so that the audience may grasp the whole meaning of the passage. After finishing a stanza and before beginning the staves belonging to another stanza, illustrative passages from the Scriptures or from other approved compositions, such as of Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lal, are also sung. Among them are the twenty-four quatrains in the *Asa* measure from Guru Ramdas, which are always sung, one with each stanza; but, as far as I have been able to discover, their only relevancy seems

to be a freshness and tenderness of sentiment, so appropriate to the morning time, and a certain similarity of lines and passages here and there. There is a strain of melancholy running throughout the music of the stanzas, which are generally sung in a bass tone.

In the ode whereon Asa-di-Var is modelled the chief interest is the story interest. Asa-di-Var, too, has for its interest the career of a man in the process of becoming an angel. It traces his progress from the state of an ordinary man to that of a perfected servant of God. He is first made to forget all other supposed agencies of creation, sustenance, and death, and is introduced to one Supreme Being as the source of every thing. The world, too, is shown to be real and not a mere dream. Then the moral relation of God with His world and man, and of the world and man with their God is described. Man has his nature inscribed with the Name or the moral presence of

God, which ever points to the right course and shows the terrors of deviating from it. In the world, too, is sublimely diffused this presence of God, which in the form of definite laws has been working in all history towards a divine end. The disciple is, therefore, warned not to work in antagonism to this Supreme Spirit; otherwise his whole life will be wasted and awful indeed will be his end. At this stage fear is the motive force, which is shown to be working in the heavens and the earth; and even those beings, whom people had in superstition set up as supreme, are made to look so small in the awful presence of God. In this way the undivided loyalty of the disciple to one Supreme God is secured.

The Guru then takes up the actual moulding of his character, which is done by eradicating the evils mostly born of egoism and by administering the truth. The egoism may be of many kinds. The

most dangerous, because most insidious, is the religious pride, by which man often does evil even when inspired by very high and unselfish motives. Most heinous crimes have been committed in the name of religion*; but the pity of it is that men did not know that they were doing so. Some people, in order to avoid this evil, have gone to the other extreme and have sought to kill their ego or individual will. The Guru shows that this is to make even virtue impossible, as it destroys the very consciousness of self which is the basis of our moral nature and makes the realization of God possible. Not the destruction but the attuning of our tiny will to the Supreme WILL is the only remedy. This is done by a life of constant praise, balanced desires, and active service. Then comes the ordinary pride of position and wealth, which the

*"The sins that men do in the name of religion are such that even the greatest sins blush before them".—Guru Gobind Singh's *Vachitra Natak*, i. 99.

Guru removes by showing the disciple how to live according to truth and to appreciate the lives of true worth. He also presents to the disciple as a warning the effect of the want of truth, love, and fear on a people's religious and political life. After this the Guru takes up the most besetting pride of caste, which has entered into the very marrow of us Indians. He most effectively refutes the reason or necessity of this institution by inculcating the belief in one God who fills all beings, whether high or low, and whose light reaches down to the lowest orders of beings. Even an illiterate Sudra is not denied His light and love, nor is a learned Brahmin immune from the effect of his sins if he leads a wayward life. It is only love and meekness which have been saving men, to whatever class they may have belonged or in whichever age they may have lived. Sweetness and humility are the essence of all virtue. The religious rites and ceremonies, of

which the higher castes boast as their especial virtues, are inconsistent with the nature of God, who is pleased with faith alone. The doing of God's service by the actual practice of positive virtues such as mercy and righteousness, is more effective in keeping men from sin than such weak devices as the sacred thread, frontal marks, and outlined cooking squares which are inconsistent with their own practices in public. The Guru denounces the false ideas of impurity, which was supposed to consist in matter and was contracted from touch. He declares that all impurity lies in the heart which is alienated from God. Last of all comes the pride of sex, which has led to such a degradation of womankind in India. The Guru condemns the belief in the inferiority of women. How could they be inferior, when they have given us kings and other great men? Women are equal with men before God and are equally responsible for their actions to

Him.

The disciple is also admonished against rudeness to his fellow-men. As he advances in perfection he may feel inclined to be impatient with those who are not so perfect or whose outward plainness belies their inward greatness. It is God's function to judge them, not ours. We should mind our own business.

There was a stage in the disciple's career when his training was conducted under the influence of fear, for 'those alone get the love of God in their hearts who entertain His fear.' But now that virtue has become spontaneous, fear departs and love remains as the only motive force in him. 'What sort of service is that in which the fear of the Master does not depart ?' The Guru gives a few particular aspects of this life of love and self-surrender, wherein man works in complete unison with God's eternal Will.

This transformation in man occurs not merely in an intellectual way through the teaching of the Guru, but through his personality as an exemplar. This is acknowledged in the overture and again and again in the stanzas. The fact is that the way of religion, as shown by Guru Nanak, is not a set of views or doctrines, but a way of life lived according to a definite model. It is based, not upon rules or laws, but upon discipleship. In the career of the disciple the personality of the Guru is all along operative, commanding his whole being and shaping his life to its diviner issues. Without such a personality there would be no cohesion, no direction in the moral forces of society, and in spite of a thousand kinds of knowledge 'there would still be utter darkness.' There would be no force to connect men with men and them with God. Everybody would exist for himself in moral isolation, 'like spurious sesame left desolate in the field' 'with a

hundred masters to own them,' all pulling in different directions. It is the Guru who removes the barriers of caste and position set up by men among themselves, as shown in Asa-di-Var, and gathering them all unto himself unites them with God.* In this way foundations are laid of a society of the purified who as an organized force strive for the good of the whole mankind.

Such a creative personality must be perfect, because 'men take after those whom they serve'.† If the ideal person is imperfect, the society and its individuals following him will also be imperfect. But 'those who serve the saved ones will be saved.'‡

The Sikh Gurus were perfect, and are described as such in the Sikh Scriptures. Guru Nanak himself says in

---

*"Nanak, the true Guru must be such as to unite all men".—*Sri Rag*, I.

"God appoints holy men as witnesses to show that He is not far from us".—*Ramkali*, *Ruti*, V. vi.

†Guru Amar Das in *Bihagre-ki-Var*, IV.

‡*Majh.*

Sri Rag: 'Everybody else is subject to error; only the Guru and God are without error.' And Guru Arjan says in *Bhairon:* 'Whoever is seen is defective; without any defect is my true Guru, the Yogi.' The state of perfection attained by the Gurus is lucidly described in the eighth and the eighteenth octaves of Guru Arjan's *Sukhmani.* The same Guru says in the *Asa* measure:

> God does not die, nor do I fear death.
> He does not perish, nor do I grieve.
> He is not poor, nor do I have hunger.
> He has no pain, nor have I any trouble.
> There is no destroyer but God,
> Who is my life and who gives me life.
> He has no bond, nor have I got any.
> He has no entanglement, nor have I any care.
> As He is stainless, so am I free from stain.
> As He is happy, so am I always rejoicing.
> He has no anxiety, nor have I any concern.
> As He is not defiled, so am I not polluted.
> As He has no craving, so do I covet nothing.
> He is pure, and I too suit Him in this.
> I am nothing; He alone is everything.

All around is the same He.
Nanak, the Guru has destroyed all my superstition
and defects,
And I have become uniformly one with Him.

The Guru is sinless. In order, however, to be really effective in saving man he must not be above man's capacity to imitate, as he would be if he were a supernatural being. His humanity must be real and not feigned. He should have a nature subject to the same laws as operate in the ordinary human nature, and should have attained his perfection through the same Grace as is available to all men and through perfect obedience to God's Will. The Sikh Gurus had fought with sin and had overcome it. Some of them had lived for a long time in error, until Grace touched them and they were perfected through a constant discipline of knowledge, love, and experience in the association of their Gurus. When they had been completely attuned to the Will divine and were sanctified as Gurus, there

remained no defect in them and they became perfect and holy. Thereafter sins did come to tempt them, but they never gave way and were always able to overcome them. It is only thus that they became perfect exemplars of men and transformed those who came under their influence to veritable angelic beings. The means used were not miracles, but the Word and the Sangat or holy Association;* which means that the work of conversion was carried on by imparting the Word and by bringing the erring man into close fellowship with the Guru and his associates. This led to a very remarkable development in the institution of Guruship, and no description of Guruship will be complete without an account of this development.

*See Bhai Gurdas, *Var*, i. 42. Also, "The dross became gold by touching the philosopher's stone: such is the glory of holy association".—*Gujri Ashtpadi*, I.

"Only through the Word can man keep the Name in his heart, and get the liberation of his understanding and the door of salvation".—*Parbhati Ashtpadi*, I.

The idea of Sangat or holy association led to the establishment of local assemblies led by authorised leaders, called *masands*. The Guru was the central unifying personality and, inspite of the ehanges in succession, was held to be one and the same as his predecessors.* The love existing between the Guru and the Sikhs was more intense than has ever existed between most

---

* In the Coronation Ode written by Satta and Balwand, two bards who lived from the Second Guru's time up to the time of the Fifth Guru, the following verses occur :—

"Guru Nanak proclaimed the accession of Lehna as the reward of service. He had the same light, the same method ; the Master merely changed his body."

"A scion of Guru Nanak exchanged bodies with him and took possession of his throne."

"The wise being, Guru Nanak, descended in the form of Amar Das."

"Guru Amar Das obtained the same mark, the same throne and the same court."

"Thou, Ram Das, art Nanak ; thou art Lehna ; thou art Amar Das ; so do I deem thee."

"The human race comes and goes ; but thou, O Arjan, art ever new and whole."

Sunder, the great-grandson, of Guru Amar Das, while describing the death scene of the Third Guru says :

"All fell at the feet of the true Guru, into whom Guru Amar Das had infused his spirit."

Mohsin Fani, who wrote in the time of the Sixth Guru, says about the Sikhs in his *Dabistan-i-Mazahib :*

romantic lovers of the world.* But the homage paid to the Guru was made impersonal by creating a mystic unity between the Sikh and the Guru on the one hand and the Guru and the Word on the other.† Greatest respect began to be paid to the incorporated Word, even the Guru choosing for himself a seat

"Their belief is that all the Gurus are indentical with Nanak."

Guru Gobind Singh in his *Vachitra Natak* says about the Gurus :

"All take them as different from one another ; very few recognise them as one in spirit. But only those realise perfection who do recognise them as one."

See the *Swayyas* towards the end of the Holy Granth ; also Bhai Gurdas's *Vars*, i. 45-48., iii. 12., xx. 1., xxiv. 5-25., xxvi. 31 and 34.

The Gurus always signed themselves as Nanak.

* Bhai Gurdas, *Var*, xxvii. Sujan Rai of Batala in his *Khulasatul-tawarikh* says about the Sikhs : "The faith that these people have in their Guru is not to be met with among any other people."

† "The Word is Guru, deep and full of wisdom."—*Sorath*, I. "Guru is the word, and the Word is Guru."—*Kanra*, IV : also *Nat Ashtpadi*, IV. "The Guru lives within his Sikhs and is pleased with whatever they like."—*Gauri-ki-Var*, IV. "The Guru is Sikh and the Sikh who practises the Guru's Word is at one with the Guru."—*Asa Chhant*, IV. See also Bhai Gurdas, *Vars*, iii. 11., ix. 16.

From the history of the Sikhs in the past as well as in the present, it is quite evident how effectively these baptismal forms, with the accompanying vows, have aided them in keeping themselves united and their ideals unsullied even in times of the greatest trial. While keeping the Sikhs associated with their Guru and maintaining his spirit among them, they have not produced any narrowing effect on their beliefs and modes of worship. Rather, as history tells us, changes for the worse have always synchronised with the want of insistence on the baptismal vows. This was in the days of the Sikh rule, when luxury and power tempted our people to consider the vows too hard for them. They lost their identity as Sikhs and became as superstitious about God and His worship as they had been before the time of the Gurus. With the modern revival the Sikhs have found themselves again; and with the old faith in the efficacy of the baptismal

vows they still believe that God is one and that there is no worship more pleasing to Him than the heartfelt singing of His hymns. All worship and ceremony, whether in temple or home, whether on birth, marriage, or death, consists of nothing else but praying and chanting hymns. Could anything be simpler?

SYNOPSIS

—:o:—

ASA-DI-VAR gives the process by which a man is gradually trained as a servant of God. As this transformation of an ordinary man into an angel is effected through the Teacher, therefore the first piece is a hymn of thanksgiving addressed to him (i. 1.), whose light of knowledge transcends all light (i. 2.). A man, who in the pride of his own unaided intellect thinks that he can dispense with that Light, will live a desolate life of moral isolation (i. 3.).

The disciple is first told of a Being who was made by nobody except Himself and who, beside Himself, has made Nature which He supports with His own presence. He is thus the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and the Master of life and death (i.). The universe and

the objects in it are real, not creations of a dream, but veritable existences set in their places with a real purpose and governed by His real laws. God and His creatures being as they have been described, there is a substantial worth in the praise and worship of the Great Reality. The only thing unreal is the worship of the transient, which is born and dies (ii. 1.). Then God is described as the greatest moral Being, whose justice is truest, who hears our complaints whether expressed or unexpressed, who understands all our intentions, and who is the perfect Master of His will (ii. 2.). The idea of the world is correspondingly moral. It is described, not as an illusion or a source of sin, but as the very house of God in which He lives; and the salvation or fall of man depends on whether man is led to realize this presence of God spread over all His works, or is deluded to believe that the world is everything and God has nothing to do with it (ii. 3.).

The disciple will thus learn that Man and Nature are inspired with the spirit of God. Man, even from his birth, is inscribed with His Name (or Divine Presence) which acts like a watchful spirit and picks out his good and evil acts. It shows him his destiny and reveals success to lie only in the love of God (ii.). Nature also, touched by the wonder working spirit of God, appears to be most sublime. The elements of fire, air, and water displaying their respective actions, the various creatures of different forms and colours, human beings with different tastes and cravings, with different aims and ideals, some aspiring to meet God, others rejecting Him and wandering in the wilderness, are all wonder-inspiring sights to a newly-awakened man (iii. 1.). He will be, however, not so lost in wonder or mystery as to forget the intelligible design underlying the whole creation. He will see that in all the objects of sight and sound, in all the sacred

books of the East and the West, in all the different ways of thought and affection, in all the customs and fashions of the world, in all the good and evil actions of men, there is a process of Nature working through definite laws, which are directed by the supreme Will of God, not arbitrarily but most intelligently (iii. 2.). Instead of enjoying an unchartered freedom and giving loose to his natural cravings, man should submit himself to the supreme Will and do good actions, otherwise his whole life will be fruitless, and awful indeed will be his end (iii.). All Nature works in fear of His Will, and even gods, saints, and heroes move in His awe. He alone stands unawed (iv. 1). Even Rama and Krishna of the historic fame are nothing before Him, the Formless and the Fearless One. Therefore the worship of these heroes is fruitless, and acting their stories of no avail. For, Realization is not such a simple thing as holding a talk or going

through a make-believe. It is obtained by inviting Grace (iv. 2.). After a man has wandered through many lives, God in His mercy may visit him with Grace, and he may so find a Teacher possessed of the saving Word. The Teacher will give him the Truth, freeing him from all sorts of Vanity (iv.).

The Teacher will introduce him to the Divine acting that is going on in Nature (v. 1.), and will show him by comparison how trivial must look the dramas of Rama and Krishna performed as acts of devotion. These performances, which consist in merely twisting the body round and round with nothing that comes from the heart, are no more meritorious than the spinning of a top or the turning of a mill. They may serve as entertainments for the mind ; but the worship of the Supreme Diety requires the offering of an active love of the heart and substantial acts of service done humbly in His cause (v. 2.). The disciple will

dedicate his body and soul to the one invisible God, and while doing good will make himself humble (v.).

Unlike those Mohammedans who spend their days in discussing the intricacies of the formal law, he will adopt the way of submission in order to see God. Unlike those Hindus who, while praising the transcendental vision of God, are yet employed in making pilgrimages and burning incense before images; unlike those Yogis who, alleging to believe in the incomprehensible and unbodied Name of God, are yet found objectifying Him in their meditations as a human form; unlike those of generous zeal who, in order to practise generosity, adopt contentment, but, at the same time, for what they give they expect fame in this world and a hundredfold reward in the next; and unlike other short-sighted men who waste their lives in evil or exhaust the merit already accumulated in the past; this disciple of the Teacher

will place before himself the glorification of the true Name as the highest craving and the greatest support of his heart. In this he will find the utmost joy of life. But he will not become proud. Rather, he will humble himself before every good man wherever found (vi. 1.). He will have no religious pride. Some Mohammedans think that those non-Muslims whose bodies are burnt after death shall go to hell. But they should remember that the dead bodies of Mohammedans too may sometimes find their way into the fire of the potter's oven (vi. 2.). This is a false attachment to sectarianism, from which the true Teacher alone can free us. The most reasonable thing is to attach oneself to God, the highest Truth, who will grant us an all-embracing life (vi.).

The Teacher then instructs the disciple in the nature of man's Ego, or his free will, which is the basis of his transmigration from life to life, serves as the

initial force in all his personal actions, and is at the root of his every choice between true and false, good and evil, pain and pleasure. We cannot see Heaven without understanding the workings of our will, which is accountable before the supreme Will of God. We see of the latter as the former makes us see it (vii. 1.). Thus it is clear that the Ego gives man his individuality and leads him to action. It also ties him down to the world and sends him on a round of births and deaths. Wherefrom comes this assertion of self? How can it leave us? It comes to man from the Will of God and determines his conduct according to his antecedents. It is a great disease; but its remedy also lies within itself. The evil is cured when, through the grace of God, man gets his will attuned to the Supreme Will and begins to practise the Word of the Teacher (vii. 2.). He becomes a man of temperate life, dedicated to service. He

devotes himself to the highest Truth and never thinks of treading in the path of evil. He does good and practises honesty, eats and drinks moderately, and does not make too much of the world. He rejoices in the abounding mercy of God, and feels at one with Him through thankfulness (vii.).

An example is given of this thanksgiving, which is the only true form of worship, other forms and ceremonies being quite useless (viii. 1.). Even different acts of supposed religious merit, such as alms-deeds, austerities, meditations, and recitations, are vain devices that cannot take the place of living in Grace (viii. 2.). This grace is granted by God through the Teacher who awakens the disciple to Truth (viii.). Mere learning, devoid of the truth that matters, is all vanity and vexation of spirit (ix. 1.). To be constantly visiting sacred places makes one talkative; and by practising asceticism and mortifying the natural

desires of the body men merely deprive themselves of the different graces of life (ix. 2.). Those who love God look beautiful at His gate, singing His praises and humbling themselves before Him (ix.).

After exposing the more subtle kinds of pride, that of religion, virtuosity, and learning, and after ministering in each case the corresponding Truth that redeems, the Teacher now introduces the disciple to the common form of pride that is found in the ordinary ways of life: in position, prosperity, wealth, beauty, love, etc. (x. 1.), and shows him what it is to live according to Truth (x. 2.). Thus freed from false evaluation of things, the disciple will learn to appreciate the lives of true worth (x.).

Referring to his own times the Teacher says that, devoid of truth, fear, and love, men become hobgoblins; their religion ceases to be a living force (xi. 1.); and their political condition becomes

most degraded, the rulers caring only for greed and lust, and the ruled, blind in ignorance, paying homage to the authorities like dead men. The priestly and the learned classes employ all their arts for gain in pandering to the pleasures of the high-placed. The pious, lowering their ideals, adopt the way of self-regarding virtue and see good only in securing an easy quittance from the world; and the so-called pure, not knowing the secret of life, find the existing order of things too hard for them, and in despair beat a hasty retreat from the world. Yet they are too proud to acknowledge that their ideals have been lowered. They still believe that their ways are perfect (xi. 2.). But they cannot deceive the vigilant eye of God, who alone will judge who comes up to His standard and who not. The considerations of class or power carry no weight with Him (xi. 3.). Only those get their lives perfected through the Teacher who are touched by Grace, no

matter what position, whether high or low, they occupy in society (xi.).

A position of adversity is not to be contemned but to be preferred to a position of prosperity, because in prosperity the heart does not yearn after God. God's light reaches down to the lowest orders of beings, and there is no man too low to realize God. Whosoever praises Him is saved (xii. 1-2.). Not realizing this people have set up differant castes with different duties. Some are to adopt learning as their way of life, others are to be always fighting, and still others have only to serve the upper classes. But to a man of right understanding there is only one and the same way for all (xii. 3.), as God is one and the same for all. It is He who fills all beings, whether high or low (xii. 4.), and as supreme Intelligence keeps all minds together (xii. 5.). A learned man who sins will not be spared on account of his

learning, nor will a good man be punished because he is illiterate. Men will be judged according to their conduct. We should, therefore, strive after goodness which matters and not be proud of our position as belonging to the learned class (xii.).

People have not only classified men according to the distinctions of blood, but they have also divided time into four ages, each characterised by a different order of things (xiii. 1.). A different Veda is assigned to each different age, with a different ideal peculiar to each. But in whatever age may we live, real salvation lies in love and devotion practised with all possible humility (xiii. 2.). Let us, therefore, thank the Teacher who has revealed this truth to us (xiii.).

Sweetness and humility are the essence of all virtue, not the humility of the hypocritical but of the sincere (xiv. 1.). Wrangling scholarliness, insincere

meditation of the idolaters, and other hypocritical forms and ceremonies, are mere vanity, being inconsistent with the nature of God. Faith in Him alone saves us (xiv. 2.). Sin damns us. We should, therefore, give up all vanity of things that pass away (xiv.). Leaving mere formalities, like the wearing of the sacred thread, that enhance the class pride, we should strive after positive virtues of mercy, self-control, purity, and righteousness that mould life (xv. 1.). With thousand evils lurking in the soul of man, what good can the sacrificial thread do to him. It will soon wear away and break (xv. 2.). The true thread that is strong is the faith in the Name and His praise. We can carry it even to the next world (xv. 3.). What thread can bind the organs and the senses? It is sheer blindness not to see this (xv. 4.). God alone through His grace can show the way of His service and reveal His Will. His servant will see his highest

good in following the Divine Will (xv.).

The Teacher then shows up the futility of the class pride by referring to the inconsistency and hypocrisy of the people's practices. They held the Brahmin and the cow sacred, and yet they did not spare them from taxation. Wearing the marks of purity they kept themselves apart from Mohammedans as untouchables, and yet they had no scruples in earning their livelihood in the latter's service, in reading their books and following their manners (xvi. 1.). The Mohammedans who read their *Nimaz* had yet no scruples in tyrannizing over men ; and the Hindus who wore the sacred thread did not refrain from cruelty. The Brahmins too, who should have known better, when invited to such people's houses, enjoyed their food as much as their hosts, and felt no qualms of conscience. They lived on lies. All decency and faith had vanished, and falsehood prevailed everywhere. While carefully preserving the

outward marks of ceremonial purity and social isolation, the Hindus yet sought the service of the Mohammedans and tried to please them by putting on their foreign fashions. They would eat meat prepared in the Mohammedan way, and yet they tried to keep their purity of food by drawing cooking circles round them. They did not know that it is the sin that defiles, and it is the purity of the heart that cleanses (xvi. 2.). They cannot, however, deceive God who can look even into the secret recesses of their hearts. He knows the impurities of the impure and the tyrannies of the high-handed, whom He can crush in a moment or reduce to beggary, if He wills (xvi.).

The Teacher next humorously exposes the futility of the *Shradh* ceremony dependent on the intercession of a particular class, and shows that there is no merit in the charity of a thief who sends the earnings of his evil trade to the

manes of his forefathers *via* Brahmins. The only acceptable charity is that which one practises out of his own honestly-earned substance (xvii. 1.). Man is constantly defiling himself; but the purification comes not from bathing the body but from enshrining God in the heart (xvii. 2). The Teacher, at the same time, keeping in mind the peculiar failings of the proud ruling class of his time, holds out a warning to them that all the means of luxury and license shall pass away, as also the youth with the capacity of enjoyment (xvii.).

As there was a false sense of purity among the Hindus, so there was a false idea of impurity, called *sutak*. When a birth or a death occurred in a family, all its members, even caste-fellows, were declared impure for a time, and their touch was supposed to defile all cooked food. But the Teacher says that if we admit this idea of impurity, impurity will be found in everything used in the kitchen.

There are living things in corn of which the meal is made, in dung and wood with which the fire is lit, and in water by which everything is made fresh and green. You cannot avoid this so-called impurity (xviii. 1.). The real impurity consists in greed, lying, lust, and slander, with which the heart, the tongue, the eyes, and the ears get polluted, and which lead the soul of man bound to hell (xviii. 2.). All other impurity contracted from touch is superstitious. Birth and death cannot cause it, as they are natural happenings ordained from God. All eating and drinking, which God has given for sustenance, is pure (xviii. 3.). The Teacher removes such evils from the mind of the disciple and, making him see the excellences of an ideal man, enables him to treasure them up in his own heart (xviii.). Impurity does not consist in matter, but in the heart of man detached from God; and the purity of life consists in living constantly in His

presence. Just as food, however purely prepared and eaten, becomes filth by passing through the body that is gross, so is man, although pure in the beginning, reduced to a filthy sinner by passing through the pleasures of life enjoyed in forgetfulness of God (xix. 1.).

After condemning the forms and ceremonies arising out of the pride of caste, the Teacher comes to the pride of sex. Only that person, man or woman, is approved in the court of God who lives a life of praise. Woman is not to be condemned on account of her sex. Why revile her from whom we derive our life, whom we love and marry, and through whom the process of the world goes on? How can she be inferior from whom we get our kings and other great men under God (xix. 2.)? Women as well as men, all acknowledge the same God and are equally responsible for their actions to Him. Why should we conduct ourselves disdainfully towards each other? If we

are superior in learning, that very learning should teach us at least not to call anybody low (xix.).

Between one person and another let there be no rudeness. By addressing others rudely a man's mind and appearance lose all their grace, and he is execrated before man and God (xx. 1.). Those who, foul at heart, flaunt their high position before the world, will never get cleansed by bathing at all the places of pilgrimage. While they who have real worth within may be clothed in rags, but they will be considered the good ones of the world, because they love God and desire to behold Him. They depend on nobody except the true Master, and look for food and raiment only to Him. They know that all men are equal before God, and that He punishes those who are evil (xx. 2.). Some may be perfect, others imperfect; God alone looks after them. It is not ours to apportion blame. We

should mind our own business (xx.).

So far the development of the disciple's character in the hands of the Teacher has been conducted mainly under the influence of God's fear. Now the instruction proceeds in the freer atmosphere of love. The lover of God should dedicate his whole love to God, and look upon whatever good or ill that comes from Him as a blessing (xxi. 1.). He should not question or criticise His doings (xxi. 2.). He should ever remember the supreme Benefactor, and in his dealings with Him look to his own best interest, which is to shun evil (xxi.). If he is proud and contentious and talks too much, he shall not relish his Master. He will succeed only if he effaces himself to perform service and constantly longs to meet Him (xxii. 1.). Love of the heart is wanted; mere lip-service is of no avail (xxii. 2.). Self-love does not go far. Unless it is removed first from the heart, the love of God cannot come

to reside in it. Not commands but prayers succeed with Him (xxii. 3.). Self-love or arrogance is like a line drawn on water which has no permanency (xxii. 4.). Led by his own unaided light a man can accomplish nothing. If he does one thing well, he will spoil another (xxii. 5.). Therefore, the servant of God should do everything according to His will. In this way his honour will be greater and his reward double. But if he sets himself up as His rival, he will rouse His jealous anger, and losing his reward will receive punishment into the bargain. We should offer thanks to our Benefactor and address prayers and no commands to Him (xxii.). The gifts that we receive from God should be taken, not as rewards for our own exertion, but as free gifts out of His bounty (xxiii. 1.).

The disciple, as a servant of God, will pass out of the stage when he had worked with the fear of God. Now he

will be completely absorbed in His will (xxiii. 2.). He will see that it is God alone who creates, sets men in different positions, and takes care of them (xxiii.). Men are made by God like vessels. Some are filled with love and mercy, others are set on fire with their passions. Some lie on cushions, while others stand and watch over them. God regenerates those whom He communicates of His grace (xxiv. 1.). It is He who created the earth and put it in its proper position among the planets. He Himself peoples it with living things and arranges their births and deaths. He is all in all (xxiv. 2.). His greatness cannot be described. It is enough to say that He does what He wills, and we have only to work in unison with His eternal Will (xxiv.).

ASA DI VAR

— : o : —

The one Supreme Being, whose name is eternal Verity, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent, the Enlightener By His Grace.

———

In ASA, by Guru Nanak, an One along with staves; there being staves also composed by Guru Nanak. The tune is of the 'Maimed Raja Uss.'

———

I

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

I am grateful to my Guru a hundred
times a day,
Who has turned men into angels, and
that without delay.

2.– GURU ANGAD.

If a hundred moons appear and a
thousand suns arise ;
With so many lights there would still be
utter darkness, if there were no Guru.

3.—GURU NANAK.

Nanak, they who wise in their own estimation do not think of the Guru,
Shall be like spurious sesame left desolate in the field ;
Yea, Nanak, left in the field with no a hundred masters to own them.
They flourish in bloom and fruit, poor ones ; but, all the same, they bear ashes in their bodies.

STANZA I

God is self-created ; so is His Name.

Beside Himself He made Nature, wherein He has His seat and looks on with fondness.

Thou art the Creator, Thou the Giver ; out of Thy grace Thou givest and spreadest out the creation.

Thou knowest everything ; with one word Thou givest life and takest it back again.

Thou sittest and lookest on with fondness.

II

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

Real are Thy universes, regions,
Countries, and created objects.
Real are Thy works and Thy purposes,
Thy rule and Thy administration,
Thy orders and Thy edicts,
Thy mercy and the mark of Thy acceptance.
Hundreds of thousands, millions upon millions call upon Thee as the true Reality.
All energies and forces are from that Reality.

Thy praise and glorification is of real worth.

Thy laws of Nature, O true King, are real.

Those who worship the true Reality are real,

And those who worship what is born and dies are most unreal.

2.—GURU NANAK.

His glory is great, because His Name is great.

His glory is great, because His justice is true,

And His seat immovable.

His glory is great, because He knows what we utter,

And understands all that we feel within our hearts.

His glory is great, because He gives without consulting others,

Being all in all Himself.

Nanak, His actions cannot be described.

Whatever He has done, or has to do, depends on His will.

3.—GURU ANGAD.

This world is the True One's house ; the True One lives in it.

Some by His will He unites with Himself ; others by His will He dooms to death.

Some by His will are kept safe ; while others make their home in worldliness.

One cannot even tell whom He may reform.

Nanak, we can only know the godly to whom God reveals Himself.

STANZA II

Nanak, God having made souled beings inscribed them with the Name, which is set up as a judge.

Before whom only truth prevails and the sinners, like lepers, are singled out .

The false ones find no refuge, and with blackened faces go to hell.

Those imbued with Thy Name come out successful, and the deceivers fail.

God inscribed the Name and set it up as a judge.

III

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

Wonderful is the word spoken and the word recorded.

Wonderful are the animated beings and their distinctions,

Their forms and their colours.

Wonderful are the creatures that go about naked.

Wonderful are the winds, and the waters,
And the fires that play wonders.

Wonderful is the earth, and the sources of production.

Wonderful are the tastes to which mortals are attached.

Wonderful is the union with God, and the separateness from Him.

Wonderful are the cravings and their gratification.

Wonderful is God's praise and His glorification.

Wonderful is man's going away in the wilderness, or his finding out the way;

Wonderful his seeking God near, or his thinking Him far away;

And worderful his beholding Him ever present.

Looking on these wonders Nanak remains fascinated.

Most fortunate is he who can understand them.

2.—GURU NANAK.

Whatever is seen or heard is in the order of Nature; so is the consciousness of fear and comfort.

The nether regions, the heavens, and all the forms in creation came in the course of Nature ;

So did the Vedas, the Puranas, the Western Books, and all the ways of thought,

And all the ways of eating, drinking, dressing, and all the ways of love.

Nature prevails in the animal kingdom, its species, genera, and colours.

Nature works in the virtues and evils of men, in their feelings of honour and dishonour.

Nature works in the air, the water, the fire, and the dust of the earth.

Thy Nature works everywhere ; Thou art the Master of Nature, Thou the Creator ; Thy Name is the holiest of the holy.

Says Nanak, God looks to everything with His will, and works most intelligently.

STANZA III

Led by himself man enjoys his lusts, until his soul departs and he is reduced to a heap of ashes.

Thus ends the worldly man, and with a chain thrown round his neck is taken away.

There his actions and character are recited before him and their account is brought home to him.

He finds no refuge from the blows. What use is it to hear his cries *now*.

The blind soul! he has wasted his life.

IV

STAVES

I.—GURU NANAK.

The wind blows in hundred blasts in fear of Him;

Hundreds of thousands of rivers flow in fear of Him;

And in fear of Him the fire slaves in its offices:

And the earth remains pressed under its burden ;
And the rain-clouds rove headlong in the sky.
In fear is the King of Death with his court ;
In fear the sun and the moon
That travel millions of miles without end.
In fear are the Sidhas, the Buddhas, and the master-Yogis ;
In fear is the firmament stretched out above.
In fear are the heroes mighty and brave,
And the whole crews of people that come and go.
All are subject to His fear, Nanak ;
Only the One, formless and true, is without fear.

2.—GURU NANAK.

Nanak, it is the Formless One that is without fear ; all others like Rama are dust

There are many tales about Krishna, and there is similar Vedic lore.

Many dance as mendicants, and wheel round and round in rhythmic tread.

These mercenary people come and stage their performances in the market-place.

Kings and queens sing their parts and utter all sorts of chatter.

They wear ear-rings and necklaces worth hundreds of thousands of rupees ;

But the bodies on which they are worn, O Nanak, shall be reduced to ashes.

We should not seek realization through mere talk ; it is hard as iron to describe.

We can only get it through Grace ; anything else, like cunning devices or efforts to impose upon His will, shall only bring discomfiture.

STANZA IV

When God in His mercy looks with Grace, the true Guru is obtained.

After a soul has wandered through many lives, the true Guru may communicate the Word to him.

There is no benefactor so great as the true Guru : let each and every body hear this.

We get the Truth by meeting the true Guru, who removes all Vanity of self from our hearts,

And interprets the veritable Truth to us.

V

STAVES

I.—GURU NANAK.

The Quarters of the day and night are the Krishnas and the cowherds, and the Hours are the milkmaids,

With the Sun and the Moon to personate them, and with the wind, the water, and the fire as their ornaments.

All earthly things serve as the stage properties, and the different intricacies of life as the theme to deal with.

The world is deluded by Ignorance and becomes a prey to Death.

2.—GURU NANAK.

The leaders dance to the tune set by their followers.

They move about their feet and shake their heads.

The dust rises and falls on their rufiled hair.

The people see and laugh and go home.

For their bread the performers sway their movements to the rhythmic throb of music,

Or dash their bodies on the ground ;

And sing as the Krishnas and the milkmaids,

Or as Sitas and the royal Ramas.

Fearless is the Formless One, whose
 Name is true,

And who has made the whole world.

His servants are those who worship
 Him with the offering of good
 actions.

Dewy is the night for those who long
 in the heart for God.

The disciples have learnt from the
 Guru's instruction

That the beneficent God saves man
 through His Grace.

Otherwise, Nanak, there is no end of
 things that turn round :

Oil-presses, spinning wheels, hand-mills,
 potters' wheels,

Whirlwinds of the desert, many and
 ceaseless,

Tops, skimming rods, corn-threshers,

Birds that go on circling with a
 breathless speed,

And insects that are twirled round on
 stakes.

Driven by his antecedents everybody goes whirling.

Into the God-designed mazes of transmigration ;

And those who trip it laughing as they dance depart weeping.

One cannot fly away from it, or become a Sidha.

Dancing and bouncing are mere entertainments for the mind.

Nanak, those alone get the love of God in their hearts who entertain His fear

STANZA V

Thy Name is Formless ; by calling upon the Name man does not go to hell.

Make thy soul and body entirely His, and share thy food with other ; but by talking about it thou shalt lose all merit.

If thou wishest well for thyself, do good and be called lowly.

However mayest thou try to keep away old age, it will come in different guises.

No one may tarry when his measure is full.

VI

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

The Mussulmans extol their sacred law, and constantly read and speculate on it.

But the servants of God are those who adopt the way of submission, in order to see God.

The Hindu praisers praise Him for His vision of transcendental beauty ;

And yet they bathe at sacred places, worship images, offer oblations and burn incense before them.

Those who are Yogis think of the Creator as the profound Peace, and call Him the Incomprehensible ;

And yet, Him whose form is invisible and whose name immaculate they objectify in the form of a human body.

They of the generous zeal, in order to practise generosity, adopt contentment ;

But in return for what they give they expect fame in this world and a hundredfold reward in the next.

There are thieves and fellows, and men false, depraved, and worthless.

There are others who go from here having spent up all their accumulated merit ; what use have they made of their lives ?

There are creatures in waters and lands ; there are beings upon beings in other worlds and regions.

What they say must be known to Thee alone ; they too must have some consciousness of Thee.

Says Nanak, the devotes hunger to praise the true Name which is their support ;

And day and night they live in an abiding joy, as the dust of good men's feet.

2.—GURU NANAK.

The clay of a Mussulman finds its way into the potter's hand,

Who fashions vessels and bricks out of it. It cries out of fire ;

And as it burns, poor thing, it weeps, and sheds tears of cinders.

Nanak, the Creator alone who made this circumstance knows whether cremation is better, or burial.

STANZA VI

None has realized God without the true Guru ; without the true Guru, none.

God has placed Himself in the true Guru, and has manifested and declared Himself through him.

Man is for ever free when he meets the true Guru, who removes from him all false attachments.

The most reasonable thing is to observe that he who attaches himself to the True One.

Will find in Him the dispenser of life universal.

VII

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

By his Ego man comes and goes,
Is born and dies.
By his Ego he gives and receives,
And earns or loses,
By his Ego he is true or false,
Has considerations of sin and virtue,
And descends to Hell or rises to Heaven.

By his Ego he laughs or weeps,
And begrimes or washes himself.
By his Ego he degrades himself from
the human order,
Is wise or foolish,
And loses all consciousness of salvation.
By the Ego he is in Maya self-obscured,
And goes into lives of different creatures.
Man can see the gate of Heaven only
if he understands the Self.
Without a proper understanding he entangles himself in wordy warfare.
Our Self makes its record under the
supreme Will;
And as we see the one, we perceive the
other.

2.—GURU ANGAD.

Thus, it is this Ego which gives man
his individuality and leads him to
action.
It also ties him down to the world
and sends him on a round of births.

Wherefrom comes this Ego ? How shall
it leave us ?

It comes to man from the Will of God
and determines his conduot accord-
ing to his antecedents.

It is a great disease ; bnt its remedy
also lies within itself.

When God sends Grace to man, he begins
to practise the word of the Guru.

Says Nanak, hear ye all, this is the
way to cure the disease.

STANZA VII

The service of God is done by the men
of temperate lives who meditate on
Him as the truest of the true.

They refrain from treading in the path
of evil, and doing good practise
honesty.

They have broken the bonds of world-
liness, and eat and drink moderately.

" Thou art lavish in Thy mercies, of
which Thou givest daily ever-in-
creasingly"—

Thus glorifying they obtain the glorious Lord.

VIII

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

"Nanak, God Himself knows the extent of animal creation

In human beings and trees, in sacred places and river-sides, in clouds above and fields below,

In islands, regions, spheres, universes and their parts ;

And that born in different ways : from the egg, the sweat, the womb, and the earth.

Having made the creatures, Nanak, He takes care of them all.

The Creator who made the creation has to take thought of it also.

The same Creator who has made the world takes thought of it.

To Him is homage due ; on Him be blessings ! His administration is inviolate".

Nanak, without the true Name what is a sacrificial mark or the sacred thread ?

2.—GURU NANAK·

Man may do countless good and virtuous deeds and what are received as charitable acts ;

He may practise countless austerities at sacred places or do yogic exercises in the wilderness to balance the mind ;

He may perform countless acts of bravery in war, and in fighting breathe his last.

He may perform countless readings of the Srutis and the Puranas ; and may in countless ways philosophize and meditate ;

Yet all these devices are vain, Nanak; the only true index of the way is the Grace of Him,

The Creator, who made the world and decreed transmigration.

STANZA VIII

Thou art the true Master who ministers the real truth.

He to whom Thou givest receives the truth and then practises it.

The truth is obtained on meeting the true Guru in whose heart He has placed the truth,

The fool does not recognize the truth and wastes his life in waywardness.

Why did he come into the world ?

IX

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

We may read and read, and make cart-loads with books or pack caravans with them :

We may read and read, and load boats
with books or fill cellars with them ;
We may read for all the years and
months that are given to us;
We may read as long as we live and
breathe ;
Yet, Nanak, there is only one truth
that matters ; all else is vanity and
vexation of spirit.

ਮ: ੧॥
ਲਿਖਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਪੜਿਆ
ਤੇਤਾ ਕੜਿਆ।

2.—GURU NANAK.

The more man reads and writes, the more
he worries himself.
The more he wanders to sacred places,
the more he chatters.
The more he wears ascetic garbs, the
more he afflicts his body.
Suffer it, O man, as thine own doing !
He who abstains from eating corn spoils
his taste,
And, being led astray, suffers much
discomfort.

He who wears no clothes remains day and night in tribulation.

By practising silence man stupefies himself ; how can he be awakened from the stupor except by the Guru ?

If he goes barefooted, he suffers as he deserves.

If he eats filth and puts ashes on his head,

The blind fool only loses his self-respect.

If he lives in the wilderness, at grave-yards or crematoriums,

The foolish man does not know that he will have to regret it afterwards.

Only that man finds peace, who meets the true Guru,

And enshrines the Name of God in his heart ;

And that too, Nanak, if God sends him Grace,

And he freeing himself from hope and fear burns up his egotism by means of the Word.

STANZA IX

Those who love Thee, God, please Thy heart.

They look beautiful at Thy gate, singing Thy praises.

Says Nanak, they who have done no good find no refuge at Thy gate and wander away from it.

There are some who do not realize their own reality, and take credit to themselves for nothing.

I am a bard of low caste; others are said to belong to high castes.

But I want those who meditate on Thee.

X

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

To be ruler over subjects and to have world-dominion,

To have halls and mansions and to reside therein,

To have gold and silver and to wear
them,

To have a body invested with superb
beauty and high array, is all vanity.

Vain are the seignior and his lady
who wreck themselves with self-
indulgence.

The vain man attached to vanity for-
gets his Creator.

To what should I attach myself, when
the whole world has to pass away.

Falsehood is like sugar, like honey;
crews upon crews sailing in falsehood
have gone overboard.

Nanak submits humbly that without
Thee, O God, everything is false.

2.—GURU NANAK.

That is being true, when the True One
is in the heart,

When the filth of falsehood departs and
the life is made clean.

That is being true, when man fixes his love on Truth,

And finds pleasure in hearing of the Name ; thus is it that he finds himself liberated.

That is being true, when man knows how to live,

And preparing the field of life puts the seed of God into it.

That is being true, when one receives true instruction,

Understands mercy to living things, and performs some acts of charity.

That is being true, when man resides at the sacred font of spirit,

Where, ever consulting the true Guru, he rests in peace.

Truth is the remedy of all, and washes away all sins :

Nanak humbly submits to those who are possessed of Truth.

STANZA X

I beg the dust of such men's feet; if I get it, I shall apply it to my forehead.

Giving up vain desires, we should with singleness of heart think of the Unseen.

We shall get the reward according to the service done by us.

If our antecedents allow it, we may obtain the dust of the true men's feet;

Or for short-sightedness we may get our service wasted.

XI

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

Truth is scarce and falsehood passes current; the darkness of the age has made goblins of men.

The seed of religion has exhausted its merit with the departure of those who had sown it ; how can the half-seed grow now ?

It would germinate, if it were whole, and the season too were congenial.

Nanak, without a mordant an unbleached cloth cannot take on colour.

If the Life be put in the vat of Fear, and the mordant of holy Endeavour be applied to it,

Then, Nanak, if it be dyed in Love, it will have nothing false about it.

ਮ: ੧ ਲਬੁ ਪਾਪੁ ਦੁਇ ਰਾਜਾ ਮਹਤਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਹੋਆ ਸਿਕਦਾਰੁ

2.—GURU NANAK.
ਆਸਾ

Sin is the king, Greed the minister, Falsehood the mint-master,

And Lust the deputy to take counsel with ; they sit and confer together.

The blind subjects out of ignorance pay homage like dead men.

The priests dance, play music, and decorate themselves in different characters;

They loudly declaim and sing their contentious parts of heroic theme.

The foolish scholars, for love of money, engage themselves in mental tricks and quibbles.

The pious do religious acts, but waste their merit by seeking the door of salvation as their reward.

The so-called chaste, not knowing the secret of life, give up their houses and homes.

Every one considers himself perfect; no one owns his shortness.

If he is measured over against merit, then can it be seen how much a man weighs.

3.—GURU NANAK.

Nanak, the True One is looking on; to Him everything rings as it happens.

All make their vaulting efforts, but only that which the Maker does comes to pass.

There is no consideration of caste or power in the next world ; there the souls are new.

Only those few are good whose merit comes to be recognized.

STANZA XI

Only those whom Thou hast apportioned Grace from on high adore Thee as their Master.

The creatures cannot help it : Thou Thyself hast made people of different sorts.

Some Thou unitest with Thyself ; others Thou lettest go astray.

Thanks to the Guru, man may know Thee in whatever position Thou choosest to communicate Thyself to him ;

And may with steady vision get absorbed in Truth.

ਸਲੋਕ ਮ: ੧
ਦੁਖੁ ਦਾਰੂ ਸੁਖੁ ਰੋਗੁ ਭਇਆ
ਜਾ ਸੁਖੁ ਤਾਮਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ॥

XII

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

Adversity is a medicine and comfort a disease, because in comfort there is no yearning for God.

Thou art the Doer, I do nothing ; when I try to do anything, nothing is effected.

Bless Thee, O Thou the indweller of Nature!

Thy ways are inscrutable. (*Note!*)

ਜਾਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਜਾਤਾ
ਅਕਲ ਕਲਾ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਆ

2

In all orders of beings is Thy light, and all orders are in Thy light ; Thou fillest all things by an art that is artless.

Thou art the true Master ; Thy praise is lovely ; whoever utters it is saved.

Says Nanak, all matters depend on the Creator; whatever is to be done, He goes on doing.

3.—GURU ANGAD.

The way of Yogis is the way of philosophy, and that of Brahmins is to read the Vedas.

The way of Kshatriyas is the way of bravery, and that of Sudras is the service of others.

But to one who knows the secret, there is one and the same way for all.

Such a one is spotless and godlike, and Nanak is his servant.

4.—GURU ANGAD.

There is one God of all gods, who is the essence of the gods' godliness.

To one who knows the secret, this essence pervades all beings.

Such a one is spotless and godlike, and Nanak in his servant.

Water is held by a pitcher, but the pitcher itself could not have been without the water.

So, the supreme Intelligence holds the mind together, although without the mind we could not have realized the supreme Intelligence.

STANZA XII

A literate man who sins will not be spared,

Nor will a good man be punished because he is illiterate.

A man is known by the work he does.

We should not play such a game as to fail in the court of God.

The literate and the illiterate shall be judged by their good sense.

It is the wayward who shall be punished in hereafter.

ਸਲੋਕ ਮ: ੧॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਮੇਰੁ ਸਰੀਰ ਕਾ ਇਕੁ
ਰਥੁ ਇਕੁ ਰਥਵਾਹੁ।

XIII

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

Nanak, as in a rosary there is one main bead, so in the chariot of human life there is one governing ideal as the driver,

Both of which, according to the learned, have been changing from age to age.

In the Satya age, Temperateness was the chariot and Piety the driver in front.

In the Treta age, Continence was the chariot and Might the driver in front.

In the Duapar age, Penance was the chariot, with Charity as the driver in front,

In the Kali age, Flaming Passion is the chariot and Falsehood the driver in front.

2.—GURU NANAK.

ਮ: ੧॥
ਸਾਮ ਕਹੈ
ਸੇਤੰਬਰੁ ਸੁਆਮੀ
ਸਚ ਮਹਿ ਆਛੈ
ਸਾਚਿ ਰਹੇ।

The Sam Veda said that the Lord was white-robed; in that age men came in Truth, lived in Truth,

And all went to be absorbed in Truth.

The Rig said that the Lord pervaded everywhere ;

In that age His name was Rama, who, among the beings of light, was as the sun among the stars ;

That sins departed by taking his name ;

And so, Nanak, men got salvation.

In the age of Yajur, the Kanh Krishna, who was a Yadva, seduced Chandrawal,

Brought the Elysian tree for his milkmaid, and disported himself in Brindaban.

In the Kali age Atharvan is the Veda, and the name of the Lord has become Allah.

The rule is of the Turks and Pathans, and blue clothes have become the fashion.

In this way all the four Vedas justify themselves.

Those who read and speculate on them get a knowledge of the Karma-lore.

But, Nanak, salvation is obtained
Only when man practises love and devotion and calls himself lowly.

STANZA XIII

Blessed be the Guru in whose company I have realized the Lord,
And who with his instruction has imparted such a sight-quickening knowledge that with these very eyes I have looked into the nature of things.

The merchants, who leaving their own Master attach themselves to another, get themselves drowned.
How few have realized that the true Guru is the boat
Which graciously ferries us across.

XIV

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

The simmal tree is straight like an arrow, and extremely tall and tufty.

Those who come to it with hopes go away disappointed ; why ?

Because its fruits are tasteless, its flowers mawkish, and its leaves of no use.

Nanak, sweetnees and humility are the essence of all goodness and virtue.

Everybody bows to himself, none to others.

He who bows is the worthier, as when a thing is placed in a balance to be weighed, the side which descends is the weightier.

An evil man bends himself the more, as does a man stalking deer.

But what is the use of bowing the head, when at heart one goes about insincere.

2.—GURU NANAK.

Men read books, recite evening prayers, and wrangle about them.

They worship stones and meditate as herons on fish.

With falsehood in the mouth they make out jewels of iron.

They repeat the Gayatri triplet three times a day.

They wear rosaries round their necks and put on sacrificial marks on their foreheads.

They keep a pair of loin-cloths with them and put napkins on their skulls.

If they knew the character of the Supreme Being,

All such beliefs and activities would appear futile;

And, says Nanak, they would come to meditate on Him with faith.

But without the true Guru they shall not find the way.

STANZA XIV

Graceful beauty and rich attire man shall have to leave on earth on his departure.

He shall have himself to meet the reward of his good and evil actions.

If he has been lording it over others to his heart's content, he shall have to pass through the narrow way.

When he goes stripped to hell, it will then look horrible indeed,

And he shall rue it for having committed sins.

XV

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

Out of the cotton of Mercy make threads of Temperateness, and twisting them with Righteous Zeal tie in them the knot of Continence.

The sacred thread thus formed will be for the soul. If thou hast it, O Pundit, put it on me.

It will not break, or get soiled, or be burnt, or lost.

Blessed is the man, O Nanak, who goes
about with such a thread on his
neck.
Thy thread is bought for four pies, and
is put on in an outlined place,
With instructions whispered in the ear
that the Brahmin has become the
guru.
When the man dies, the thread falls off,
and he goes away threadless.

2.—GURU NANAK.

Myriads of thefts, villainies, falsehoods,
and calumnies ;
Myriads of deceptions and secret sins
accompany the soul of man night
and day.
And yet a thread is spun out of cotton,
and the Brahmin comes to twist it.
A goat is slaughtered, cooked, and eaten ;
and then everybody present says,
'Put on the thread.'
When it gets old, it is cast away and
another has to be put on again.

Nanak, the thread would not break if there were strength in it.

ਮ: ੧ ॥ ਨਾਇ ਮੰਨਿਐ ਪਤਿ ਊਪਜੈ ਸਾਲਾਹੀ ਸਚੁ ਸੂਤੁ ॥

3.—GURU NANAK.

By praising God the true thread is produced, and by believing in His Name its dependability.

Such a sacred thread will not break, and may be worn even in the court of God.

ਮ: ੧ ॥ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੀ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਨਾਰੀ ॥ ਭਲਕੇ ਥੁਕ ਪਵੈ ਨਿਤ ਦਾੜੀ ॥

4.—GURU NANAK.

There is no string to bind the male and the female organs,

So that man every day disgraces his beard.

There is no string for the feet or the hands ;

No string for the tongue or the eyes.

The Brahmin himself goes about without such strings ;

Yet he twists strings for others and puts them round their necks ;

He marries them for hire,

And takes out his scroll to show them their future.

Hear him, ye people, and look at the wonder of it :

He is blind in the soul, and yet he calls himself a seer.

STANZA XV

When God in His mercy sends Grace to man, He puts him to His work.

That worker would serve the Lord in whom He chooses to realize His Will.

If he carries out His Will to His satisfaction, he shall get a place in his Master's palace.

If he does what pleases his Master, he shall attain his heart-desired wish,

And enter the court divine arrayed in honour.

ਸਲੋਕ ਮ: ੧॥
ਗਊ ਬਿਰਾਹਮਣ ਕਉ ਕਰੁ ਲਾਵਹੁ
ਗੋਬਰਿ ਤਰਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ॥
ਧੋਤੀ ਟਿਕਾ ਤੈ ਜਪਮਾਲੀ ਧਾਨੁ
ਮਲੇਛਾਂ ਖਾਈ॥

XVI

STAVES.

1.—GURU NANAK.

You tax the cow and the Brahmin; you cannot be saved by the cow-dung.

You wear a loin-cloth, a sacrificial mark, and a rosary; yet you earn your living from those whom you call *Malechhas*.

You perform the Hindu worship in private; yet, O my brothers, you read the books of Mohammedans and adopt their manners.

Put away hypocrisy;

By calling upon the Name you shall be saved.

ਮ: ੧॥
ਮਾਣਸ ਖਾਣੇ ਕਰਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜ॥
ਛੁਰੀ ਵਗਾਇਨਿ ਤਿਨ
ਗਲਿ ਤਾਗ॥

2.—GURU NANAK.

Those who devour men, yet read the *Nimaz*;

Those who ply the dagger have sacred strings on their necks.

Even Brahmins, in such people's houses, sound their conchs.

And enjoy their food as much as they themselves.

They trade in lies with the capital of falsehood,

And earn their food by speaking lies.

Decency and faith are remote from them ;

And, Nanak, falsehood prevails everywhere.

With all their sacred marks on the forehead and their loin-cloths tucked in behind,

They are butchers of the world, with daggers in their hands.

They wear blue clothes in order to be acceptable to the ruling class.

They earn their living from those whom they call *Malechhas*; yet they worship the Puranas.

They eat meat of a goat killed in the Mohammedan fashion, with the unutterable words pronounced on it.

Yet they allow no access to their cooking squares.

Having smeared a place for cooking purposes they draw a line around it ;

And sitting within, false as they are,

They say, "Touch it not ! O touch it not !

Or this food of ours will be polluted".

But their bodies are already defiled with their foul deeds,

And their hearts are false even while they rinse their mouths.

Says Nanak, we should worship the Truth ;

If we are pure, we shall obtain it.

STANZA XVI

God has all things within His ken, and sees them passing before His eyes.

He Himself causes approved actions to be done, and Himself grants high rewards.

The Greatest of the great assigns to each being of His ample world his own respective task.

If He turns His eye of wrath, even Sultans are reduced to straw,

Or made to beg from door to door, with nobody to offer alms to them.

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ: ੧॥
ਜੇ ਮੋਹਾ ਕਾ ਘਰੁ ਮੁਹੈ ਘਰੁ
ਮੁਹਿ ਪਿਤਰੀ ਦੇਇ॥

XVII

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

If a robber robs a house and offers the proceeds of his theft to his departed ancestors,

The property will be recognized in the next world and will bring the charge of theft on the ancestors.

Justice will require that the hands of the intermediary Brahmin be cut off.

Nanak, we get hereafter only what we give out of our own hard-earned substance.

2.—GURU NANAK.

As a woman menstruates recurringly,
So unclean men, with foulness in their mouths, defile themselves again and again.
They are not to be called pure who wash their bodies and sit at leisure.
Rather are they pure, Nanak, who enshrine the Lord in their hearts.

STANZA XVII

Men possess caparisoned coursers, swift as the wind, and harems decked with every kind of grace.
They lay out their expansiveness in houses, halls, and mansions.
They indulge in revels to their heart's content, and being dissipated do not recognize God.

They live by domineering over others, and seeing their magnificence forget that they have to die,

Until, foiled in youth, they are overtaken by old age.

XVIII

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

If we admit the idea of impurity by birth or death, impurity will be found in everything.

There are worms in dung and wood ;

There is no grain of corn without life.

Water is the primary element of life, by which everything is made fresh and green.

How can we keep away this impurity ? It *will* enter into our kitchens.

Nanak, we cannot remove impurity in this way ; it can be washed away by true knowledge.

2.—GURU NANAK.

The heart gets impure with greed, and the tongue with lying ;

The eyes get impure by staring at another's wealth, his wife and her beauty ;

The ears get impure by devouring the slander of others.

Nanak, these impurities lead the soul of man bound to hell.

3.—GURU NANAK.

All other impurity contracted from touch is superstitious.

Birth and death are ordained ; we come and go by His will.

All eating and drinking, which God gave as sustenance, is pure.

Nanak, those who have realized this through the Guru donot believe in this impurity.

STANZA XVIII

Let us praise the true Guru as a great being in whom there are great excellences,

Which are seen only if the Master makes us meet him,

And which come to reside in our hearts if it pleases him.

At his command and with his hand extended over our heads the evils are driven out from us.

With the Master's favour we obtain the nine treasures of the excellences.

XIX

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

A Hindu having first purified himself sits in a purified place.

Purified plates are placed before him, and no unclean touch is allowed.

Cleaning himself again he eats the food, and then he takes to uttering holy verses.

If after all it is thrown away in a filthy place, whose fault is that ?

The corn was heavenly ; the water was heavenly ; so were the fire and the salt.

With the addition of the fifth element, butter,

The cooked food became holy.

It came to be spat upon as filth because of passing through the body that is gross.

The man who does not utter the Name with his mouth and enjoys the dainties of life without Him,

Shall be similarly spat upon in the face, O Nanak.

2.—GURU NANAK.

It is by woman, the condemned one, that we are conceived, and from her that we are born ; it is with her that we are betrothed and married.

It is woman we befriend, and she who keeps the race going.

When one woman dies, another is sought for; and it is with her that we get established in society.

Why should we call her evil from whom great men are born ?

It is also from woman that women are born; there is nobody who is not born of woman.

Nanak, only the one true God is independent of woman.

They who ever praise God with their mouths are full of fortune and beauty ;

And, Nanak, they alone will appear with bright faces in the court of the true One.

STANZA XIX

All acknowledge the same God as their own ; find out if there is any who does not.

Each person is responsible himself for his actions, and shall have to settle his account himself.

When we are not to remain in this world, why should we conduct ourselves in pride?

If we have studied letters, they should teach us at least not to call anybody low;

Nor should we strive with a fool.

XX

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

Nanak, by addressing others rudely a man's mind and appearance lose all their grace.

He is called a boor and bears a boorish reputation.

The rude man is rejected in the court of God and is spat upon in the face.

He is taken as a fool, and is punished with shoe-beating.

ਮ:੧
ਅੰਦਰਹੁ ਝੂਠੇ ਪੈਜ ਬਾਹਰਿ
ਦੁਨੀਆ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਫੈਲੁ ।

2.—GURU NANAK.

Those who, foul within and respectable without, flaunt themselves before the world,

Will never get their filth removed even if they bathe at the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage.

Those who wear silk inside and waste-cotton outside are yet the good ones of the world,

For they are in love with God and desire to see Him.

In His love they laugh or cry, or even hold their peace.

They care for nobody except their true beloved Master,

At whose door they beg for maintenance, and eat it only when He gives.

They know that there is only one Court and one Pen, before which all meet alike, whether high or low;

And that their accounts being examined, Nanak, they who are found evil are pressed like oil in a mill.

STANZA XX

Thou Thyself madest the creation and Thyself supportest its scheme.

Sustaining all, whether perfect or imperfect, Thou watchest over Thy handiwork.

Whoever comes here has to depart, and everybody gets his turn.

Why should we disregard the Lord who owns our life and soul.

We should, rather, arrange our own affairs with our hands.

XXI

STAVES

1.—GURU ANGAD.

How is it lover-like to attach oneself to anybody other than the beloved ?

Nanak, only he can be called God's lover who is in constant communion with Him.

Man considers favourable things from Him as good and unfavourable things as evil.

He is no lover who deals with Him in this calculating manner.

2.—GURU ANGAD.

The servant who acknowledges a master and at the same time opposes his answers to him, has made a false start.

His both attitudes are false, Nanak; there is no room for such a servant.

STANZA XXI

We should always remember the Master in whose service we find happiness.

When we have to bear the consequences of our doings, why should we exert ourselves in evil?

We should be far-sighted, and should not do at all what is evil.

We should make such a throw as not to lose in the game with the Master,
And should work with a fair margin of gain.

XXII

STAVES

1.—GURU ANGAD.

If the servant while performing his service is proud and contentious,

And talks too much, he shall not relish his Master.

He shall get some recognition, if he denies himself to perform service.

Nanak, the application to that service is commendable by which one meets the Object of his application.

2.—GURU NANAK.

What is rooted in the heart will sprout forth: the words that come out of the mouth are but as wind.

Man sows poison and expects ambrosia; look at the justice of it!

2.—GURU ANGAD.

Attachment to the infantine Self does never come right.

With it man acts only so far as it enables him to see ; let anybody test it.

One thing can be put into something only if another be first removed.

Commands will not succeed with the Master ; it behoves us only to pray.

By working at vanity only vanity is produced, and by praising Him a joy serene.

4.—GURU ANGAD.

Attachment to the infantine Self or the grandiose Pride.

Is like a line drawn on water which leaves no trace or mark.

5.—GURU ANGAD.

If a man, led by the untutored Self, undertakes anything, he will not do it well.

If he does one thing well, he will spoil another.

ਪਉੜੀ।
ਚਾਕਰੁ ਲਗੈ ਚਾਕਰੀ ਜੇ ਚਲੈ ਖਸਮੈ ਭਾਇ॥

STANZA XXII

The servant should engage in service only if he would follow the Master's will.
He will receive much honour, and his wages too will be double.
But if he sets himself up as his Master's rival he will only rouse His indignation,
And, losing his wages already received, will get shoe-beatings in the face.
We should offer thanks to Him who gives us what we eat.
Nanak, not commands but prayers succeed with the Master.

ਸਲੋਕ ਮ: ੨॥
ਏਹ ਕਿਨੇਹੀ ਦਾਤਿ ਆਪਸ ਤੇ ਜੋ ਪਾਈਐ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾ ਕਰਮਾਤਿ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੁਠੈ ਜੋ ਮਿਲੈ॥

XXIII

STAVES

1.—GURU ANGAD.

What sort of gift is that which we obtain on our own account ?
Nanak, that is the real boon which comes from the Master's grace.

ਮ: ੨॥
ਏਹ ਕਿਨੇਹੀ ਚਾਕਰੀ ਜਿਤੁ ਭਉ ਖਸਮ ਨ ਜਾਇ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਕਾਢੀਐ ਜਿ ਸੇਤੀ ਖਸਮ ਸਮਾਇ॥

2.—GURU ANGAD.

What sort of service is that in which the fear of the Master does not depart ?

Nanak, he alone can be called a servant who is absorbed in his Master's will.

STANZA XXIII

Nanak, we cannot know God's purposes, nor the extent of His creation.

He Himself constructs and then destroys it.

Some have got chains round their necks ; others have many horses to ride.

He Himself does and Himself causes things to be done ; to whom else shall I appeal ?

Nanak, He who made the world will take care of it.

XXIV

STAVES

1.—GURU NANAK.

God Himself shapes men as vessels, and brings them to perfection.

In some is put the milk of loving-kindness ; others are ever set on the fire of passions.

Some lie down to sleep on cushions ; others stand to watch over them.

God regenerates those on whom He looks with grace.

2.—GURU ANGAD.

It is God who makes and acts on the earth, and sets it in its proper place.

It is He who having made the living things in it looks to their establishment and death.

Whom shall we say anything, O Nanak, when God is all in all.

STANZA XXIV

The glories of the great God cannot be described.

He is the Creator, almighty and beneficent ; He ministers to the wants of His creatures.

We have only to do that work which He has apportioned to us from on high.

Nanak, there is no refuge for us but in the one God,

Who does what He wills.

[*Corrected.*]

NOTES

[In a quotation cited the number given in Roman capitals refers to the Guru to whom it belongs and that in small type indicates the portion from which it is taken.]

The one Supreme Being, etc.—This is an invocation to God, and is given in full before all the main portions, named after the different musical measures, of the Holy Granth. It is also given, in a condensed form, before each and every distinct passage in the Book.

Asa—is musical measure sung early in the morning.

An Odo along with staves:—This phrase shows that an ode is, strictly speaking, a piece composed of stanzas only and need not necessarily include staves, as may be seen from any old Punjabi ode outside the Holy Granth. Even in the Holy Granth itself there are two short odes, that of Guru Arjan in the *Basant* measure and of Satta and Balwand in *Ramkali*, which are wholly composed of stanzas and have got no staves.

The Maimed Raja Uss:—Uss was the son of a Raja named Sarang. The father in his old age married a beautiful young woman who fell in love with Uss, her own stepson. Finding that he was proof against her lascivious advances, the evil woman brought a false charge against him of attempting to seduce her. The infatuated husband believed her and sentenced his son to death, but the humaner Minister intervened and the life of the Prince was saved. One of his hands, however, was cut off and he was thrown in the maimed state outside the city. He was taken up by a company of merchant travellers, who took him to a neighbouring country and sold him to a washerman. This washerman employed him in his work, and every day the maimed Prince, seated on an ox laden with clothes, used to come and go between his master's house and the riverside One day the king of the country died, and, as he had left no heir, it was resolved by his ministers to appoint anybody king who should first appear at the gate of the city in the morning. It happened that on the day appointed it was Uss who came early in the morning with his ox to take his master's clothes to the river. As he approached the gate, the men who were lying in wait took him up and brought him to the Palace and invested him with kingship. He ruled well, and the fame of his

goodness and justice spread abroad. Once a famine occurred in the neighbouring lands, and his father, who yet knew him not, was constrained to seek his help. The Minister, who had saved the life of Uss, came to ask for grain, and the Prince recognizing him gave him all that he desired. The Minister returned to Raja Sarang and reported to him the generosity of his ill-treated son. The Raja repented of his cruelty and was reconciled to his son. He gave up his kingdom to Uss, and himself retired from the world to spend his remaining days in love and devotion to God.

A bard recorded the tale of the sufferings and virtues of Raja Uss in an ode which is still extant. It was on this ode, famous at the time, that Guru Nanak modelled his Ode in the Asa measure.

I

i

In the Sikh Scriptures God is described both as *nirgun*, or absolute, and *sargun*, or personal. Before there was any creation God lived absolutely in Himself, but when He thought of making Himself manifest in creation He became related. In the former case, 'when God was Himself self-created, there was none else; He took counsel and

advice with Himself; what He did came to pass. Then there was no heaven, or hell, or the three-regioned world. There was only the Formless One Himself; creation was not then' (*Gujri-ki-Var*, III). There was then no sin, no virtue, no Veda or any other religious book, no caste, no sex (Guru Nanak's *Maru Solhe*, xv, and Guru Arjan's *Sukhmani*, xxi). When God became *sargun* or manifest, He became what is called the Name, and in order to realize Himself He made Nature wherein He has His seat and 'is diffused everywhere and in all directions in the form of Love' (Guru Gobind Singh's *Jaap*, 80).

In presenting this double phase of the Supreme Being, the Gurus have avoided the pitfalls into which the people of both East and West had fallen. The Aryans in the East who believed in the immanence of God were not true monotheists. They were either pantheistic or polytheistic. Sometimes, when their thoughts in their highest flights transcended these sensualizing tendencies, they reached a kind of monism which was too abstract for human nature's daily use. And the Semetic people in the West, who believed in one God, conceived Him as outside and above Nature. With them God was not immanent but a transcendental Being; not an abstract idea or a moral

force, but a personal Being capable of being loved and honoured. This belief, when acted upon by the Hellenistic influences which were surcharged with the idea of immanence, came to acquire the same polytheistic tendency as was prevalent among the Aryans in the East. The God of Christians came to figure as a Trinity, including a human being on earth in the person of Jesus Christ. The Semetic instinct, however, restricted the incarnation of the Deity to one occasion only, and saved the Christians from becoming polytheists.

The Sikh Gurus combined the ideas of immanence and transcendence, without taking away anything from the unity and the personal character of God.

"O ! give me, give me some intelligence of my Beloved.
I am bewildered at the different accounts I hear of Him.
O happy wives, my companions, say something of Him.
Some say that He is altogether outside the world; others that He is altogether contained in it.
His colour is not seen; His features cannot be made out; O happy wives, tell me truly——
'He lives in everything; He dwells in every heart; yet He is not blended with anything; He is separate'."— *Jaitsri*, V.

"Why dost thou go to the forest in search for God ?
He lives in all, is yet ever distinct : He abides with thee too.
As fragrance dwells in a flower, or reflection in a mirror,
So does God dwell inside everything; seek Him therefore in the heart".——*Dhanasri*, IX.

In *Asa-di-Var* God is called 'the indweller of Nature,' and is described as filling all things 'by an art that is artless' (xii. 1-2). His Will is above Nature as well as working within it, and in spite of its immanence it acts not as an arbitrary force but as a personal presence working 'most intelligently' (iii. 2). The first thing about God is that He is indivisibly one, above every other being, however highly conceived, such as Vishnu, Brahma, or Shiva (i), or as Rama and Krishna (iv. 2). The second thing is that He is the highest moral Being (ii.2), who has inscribed all men with His Name or moral presence (ii). He is not a God belonging to any particular people, Muslim or Hindu, but is 'the dispenser of life universal' (vi). The ways to realize Him are not many, but only one (xii.3), and that way is not knowledge, formalism (xiv.2., xv.1-4), or what are received as meritorious actions which establish a claim to reward (viii.2), but love (xiii 2) and faith (xiv.2), the aim being to obtain the grace of God (iv.2., v.2., viii.2.,xxiii.1). The only way of worshipping Him is to sing His praises (vi.1., vii., ix., xii.2., xix.2., xxii.3) and to meditate on His Name (ii., viii. 1., ix.2., xvi.1).

The Name is a term, like *logos* in Greek, bearing various meanings. Sometimes it is used for God Himself, as in *Sukhmani*, xvi.5 :

"The Name sustains the animal life ; the Name supports the parts and the whole of the universe."

And Kabir's *Bibhas Parbhati*, 2: " According to the Hindus the Name resides in an image".

Also *Jaitsri*, IV, 5 : " I thank my true Guru who revealed to me the Name that was hidden."

But "none can know God just as He *is*" (*Gauri Bawan Akhri* of Kabir), because "one must be as high as He Himself to know how high He is" (*Japji*, xxiv). Therefore it is clear that all that we can know about God is only a partial view of Him. So in the Sikh Scriptures the word 'Name' also means God as revealed : "His glory is great; because His Name is great" (*Asa-di Var*, ii.2). Wherever He is manifested, there is His Name. "Whatever is, is the manifestation of His Name. There is no place where the Name is not" (*Japji*, xix). But it is also revealed in the Scripture. Therefore the third meaning of the word 'Name' is the Word as recorded in the Holy Scripture. Compare *Maru*, III : "What the Guru says is the immortalizing Word ; read it night and day as the Name of God." In Guru Arjan's *Sukhmani* the piece itself is called 'the divine knowledge, the praise of God, and the Name' (xxiv. 5) ; and the Name is identified with the Word of the Guru. In many other places the same attributes are given to the Word as to the Name. See *Sri Rag*, IV, *ghar* 1, *ashtpadi* 5. This Name is to bo sung, uttered, thought upon, served, and worshipped.

II

1.

1. **Real,** not simply true as opposed to false, but real as opposed to imaginary, delusive, and baseless as conceived in Vedantism. According to Guru Nanak, Man and Nature form one gand truth or reality, not a reality final and abiding, but a reality on account of God's presence in it. Everything in its own degree is as real as God.

3.

1. It is true that in the Sikh Scriptures the world is sometimes also described as a dream, a wall of sand, and a mountain of smoke; *e.g.*, in *Sorath*, IX, viii., *Jaitsri-ki-Var*, V, viii., *Majh-ki-Var*, I, i., and *Basant*, IX, iv. The apparent discrepancy is easily explained if we refer to the context in each case. The world is of two kinds: the world as God made it and the world as made by man's own desires and attachments. For example, "mother, father, sons are all made by God; and it was God who established their relationships" (*Gujri*, IV). They and their relations are real, and man's duty is to fulfil them with all the due affection. But when he completely wraps himself up in them and forgetting God takes all his happiness to depend

on them, he creates a world of his own which is illusory. It is in this sense that the world of dominion, wealth, beauty, and love is called a vanity (*Asa-di-Var*, x.1).

ii

1. **Inscribed them with the Name:** *Cf. Japji*, i.6.

III

1.

The first effect of the awakening of God-consciousness in man is that the whole creation looks transfigured with the sense of the indwelling Divinity. What had appeared so commonplace to him assumes a new significance, and he is struck with a sense of marvel at the works of Nature and Man. In his ecstasy of wonder he glances from Man to Nature and from Nature to Man, and the Guru too in the description of this experience mixes his observations on Man with those on the phenomena of Nature. There appears to be a mystery in the very elements of water, fire, and air. The number and variety of beings, their origin and history, their structure and habits, senses and intelligence,

offer an endless field of interest and wonder. In Man the first most marvellous thing noted is his language, written and spoken. Then his tastes, of the eye, the ear, and the mind, beginning from the most primitive to the most sublime, like music which moves his enraptured soul to a union with God or draws his mind away from Him. Then his different cravings, from eating, drinking, and dressing to the most passionate desires of his flesh, and the ways adopted for their gratification. Lastly his religious tendencies that lead him to praise God and see Him face to face, or in intellectual pride and spiritual ignorance to wander away from Him.

7. **The sources of production** were supposed to be four: the egg, the sperm, the sweat, and the seed. See *Asa-di-Var*, viii.1.4.

2.

1. **Nature**: the causative and efficient system of forces whose reason is not in themselves but in the supreme Will of God.

The consciousness of fear and comfort: The Guru refers to the primitive stage of man's advancement, when the horizon of his spiritual outlook was

so narrow that he was conscious of Fear and Comfort alone as the highest inducements for action; *i. e.*, when fear governed his actions, and the highest motive in him was to do only that which would be conducive to his own happiness.

3. **The Western Books:** The Old Testament, the Psalms of David, the New Testament, and the Quran are called *Books* by way of excellence, and their followers 'People of the Book.'

IV

1

9. The Sidhas were the asceties who by performing yogic exercises were said to have acquired miraculous powers. The most important of them were 84 in number. Those who had attained perfect knowledge were called the Buddhas. The Master-Yogis, or anchorets called Naths, were nine in number.

2

This and the second stave of the next stanza refer to the performance of miracle plays by Hindu devotees. These plays were acted at night as religious exercises in temples and outside in streets.

or at fairs, as we learn from Bhai Gurdas's *Var*, i. 39. The stage properties were very simple, and no attempt was made to produce an atmospheric effect by dressing up a stage or arranging a background with 'scenes.' False hair or flaxen wigs, paints, costly dresses, and ornaments were, however, used to produce a personal effect. Boys used to act the female parts. The acting consisted chiefly of singing accompanied with appropriate dancing. There were also itinerant companies of players who made a living by these performances. The offerings made to them by the spectators were voluntary, and were collected by taking round a plate at intervals during the play.

These miracle plays were mostly of Rama and Krishna who, in the later times, stood highest in the Hindu Pantheon. In order to secure man's loyalty to one God, it was necessary for the Guru to repudiate the belief in these heroes as incarnations of God, who is formless and devoid of all fear :

"A mortal's worship brings constant labour, and that of God brings salvation "—*Dhanasri*, V.

"God having created the atmosphere set bounds to the water and the fire, and supported the whole earth.

What greatness could be gained by Him by killing Rawan, who got his ten heads cut off on account of his passion-blindness ?

What praise, O God, can I give Thee ?

With love Thou pervadest everything.

Having created living beings, Thou holdest the secret of life in Thy hand; what greatness could be obtained by stringing the black serpent of the Jamna ?

Whose husband could Thou be called ? who could be Thy wife, when Thou pervadest all ?

Brahma, the granter of boons, went with his family to see the end of His creation, but could not find it; what greatness could be obtained by such a God by slaying Kans ?"
—*Asa*, I.

"The avtars of partial light created by Thee went astray, and ruling like earthly kings fought for pain and pleasure."—*Gujri-ki-Var*, III, xix.

"The kings created by Thee in different ages are sung of as Thine avtars."—*Asa*, III.

"May that tongue be burnt that says that the Lord takes birth."—*Bhairo*, V.

V

2.

21-22. Cf. *Sukhmani*, xi. 6-7.

23-24. **One cannot fly away**: The Sidhas by their yogic practices were supposed to have acquired, among other things, the power of flying away. See Bhai Gurdas's *Var*, i.41.5.

By dancing and laughing away his opportunities man only invites troubles to himself. Life is too

serious a business. One cannot run away from it or skip over its difficulties by a miracle. There is no cutting of Gordian knots; each has to be smilingly unravelled.

26. Compare:

"Those who fear God have nothing else to fear; but those who fear not Him have much fear in store for them."—*Suhi-ki-Var*, II.

"Without the fear of God none shall be saved.

His fear keeps the love for Him in good trim.

His fear in our life of flesh is a fire which blazes as we fear Him,

And with which our way of life is moulded in an orderly fashion.

What is fashioned without fear is worthless;

Shapeless is its mould and purposeless the stroke thereon."—*Gauri Guareri*, I.

See also *Suhi-ki-Var*, III, ix.

VI

2.

The clay found in graveyards is considered best by potters on account of its cohesiveness; and so in a way the dead bodies of Mohammedans, as of Hindus, may find their way into the fire.

VII

I.

7. The Gurus often mentioned the Heaven and Hell of Hindus and Mohammedans, just as they mentioned Dharamraj, the King of Death, as believed by Hindus, and Azrail as believed by Mohammedans. But they themselves did not believe in the one or the other. For them to win a place near God was to be in Heaven, and to be flung away from His presence was to be in Hell. In the epilogue of his *Japji* Guru Nanak describes the ultimate destination of man and says, "According to their own actions, some shall get a place just near Him, while others shall be thrown far away." Sometimes in a beatific state the Gurus visioned a place of eternal rest in the following terms :

"What place is that which is immortal ?
What word is that which destroys the low understanding ?
There is ultimate death in the heaven of Indra :
The heaven of Brahma shall not stand ;
And that of Shiva shall also pass away."
"But where there are balanced desires, praise and love of
God, and true essential knowledge.
There is the real abiding place of constant bliss.
There is the company of holy beings rapt in God's glory.

There flourishes the eternal City of Fearlessness,
Where is no dread or superstition, no sorrow or anxiety, no coming or going, and no death.
There is always happiness there, in theatres resounding with spontaneous music.
And thronged with God's lovers who subsist on singing His praises."—*Gauri Guareri, V. ashtpadi* 4.

Says Ravidas in *Gauri Guareri* :

"There is a place called the CITY OF NO-SORROW,
Where pain and grief find no room.
There is no anxiety for paying tribute or holding property,
Nor of making a default or suffering a decline.
Now have I seized upon an excellent home.
Which always prospers well, my friends.
There firm and for aye is the sovereignty of God,
With no second or third to rival Him; He alone rules there.
The City is well-peopled and ever renowned.
Its inhabitants are rich and fully satisfied.
Theirs it is to go about as they please.
They are intimate at the Sovereign's Palace where nobody checks them as they enter.
Says Ravidas, the emancipated tanner,
He who enjoys the freedom of that City is my friend."

See also Guru Arjan's *Suhi, ghar* 3, xii. 6, and Kabir's *Gauri Guareri*, 10.

13. **Maya** : "Maya is that by which man forgets God, a false attachment is produced in him, and he begins to love something else in the place of God."—*Anand*, III, 29.

15. Our tiny individual self has its essence in the Universal Soul; therefore it is by our individual will that we realize our own being, and by and through it that we have to realize the Divine. It is by understanding the value and limit of our own self that we can find the highest aim of our being. Through ignorance of the true meaning of self, we set it up as our highest ideal and engross ourselves in its enjoyments. This acts as a barrier between us and the higher meaning of life.

2.

1-2. These two lines summarize the ideas of the previous stave.

4. **Antecedents** : Man does not start his life with a blank character. He has already existed before he is born. He inherits his own past as well as that of his family and race. All this goes to the making of his being and has a share in the moulding of his future. But this is not all. He is given a will with which he can modify the inherited

and acquired tendencies of his past and determine his coming conduct. If this were not so, he would not be responsible for his actions. This will is, again, not left helpless or isolated; but, if through the Guru's Word it be attuned to the Supreme Will, it acquires a force with which he can transcend all his past and acquire a new character.

VIII

2.

3. Cf. *Asa-di-Var*, xii. 3.2. The reference is to the duty of fighting bravely which was assumed by Kshatriyas as the highest end of their lives. The Guru was not against bravery in the field. He says in *Wadhans*: "It is the privilege of manly and brave men to die, if they die in an approved cause." In his *Japji*, xxxvii, the realm of noble bravery is described as the stage only next to the highest. But he did not want that fighting in itself should be considered as the highest duty of man and should take the place of seeking the grace of God.

4. **The Srutis**: the Vedas.

IX

2.

Cf. "Nanak, by associating oneself with the true Guru the way of living is perfected; and even while laughing, and playing, and dressing, and eating, salvation is obtained." —*Gujri-ki-Var*, V.

XI

1.

4. The metaphor is from dyeing. In order that a cloth may retain the colour to be applied to it, it is first steeped in alum or some other substance as a mordant.

2.

4-5. The reference is to the performance of dramas by the priests.

7. *Cf.*

"If a man loves to see God, what cares he for salvation or paradise?"—*Asa*. I.

"I long not for empire; I long not for salvation; my soul loves Thy lotus feet."—*Devgandhari*, V.

3.

3. When we shall appear before God, we shall have to shed all the accretions of caste or position, and stand naked in the soul.

Compare :

"What power has caste? It is the reality that is tested."—
Majh-ki-Var, I.

" Recognize the spirit in men; don't ask their caste; there is no caste in the next world."—*Asa*, I.

" The Potter has fashioned vessels of different sorts, but the same clay has been used for all the world."—
Bhairo, III.

" Nonsense is caste; and nonsense the titled fame."—
Sri Rag-ki-Var, I.

See also Guru Gobind Singh's *Akal Ustat*, 85-86.

XII

1.

4. **(Note).** This 'note' points to the two lines preceding it. It generally consists of a single verse or couplet, and (like the word selah, occuring in the Biblical Psalms) serves as an index of the most important idea of the passage in which it occurs. It is also taken as the burden of a song. Sometimes there are two, three, or even four, such 'notes' in a compound passage.

2.

1. **An art that is artless,** a most consummate art, which is so contrived as to hide all traces of art. Cf. *Ars est celare artem.* (Art consists in hiding art).

3.

This and the next stave, as also the second stave of the fourteenth stanza, are in Prakrit, and are shown towards the end of the Holy Granth as the compositions of Guru Nanak.

4.

The reasoning is that we cannot be proud of our superior birth or position, if we realize that God fills all : "He who knows that one God is in all creatures will never assert the pride of his self."—*Asa Patti*, I.

5.

Compare Kabir's *Gauri Purbi*, 52 :

"The thread of life snaps, then all consciousness departs ; where is gone the power of speech ?

This question troubles me night and day, and nobody solves it for me.

Were the universe made only of matter, there would be n human body, as there would be no organic Mind then.

This unifying Intelligence is always independent of matter. Wherein does it have its existence ?

If it were matter alone, it by itself could not unite or disintegrate anything. There would then be no Master, no servant, no going anywhere of anybody.

I say, Kabir, my heart is fixed on where God dwells for ever and ever.

The secret is fully known to God Himself who is immortal."

XIII

1.

As there is one main bead at the head of a rosary, and as there is one driver in a carriage, so in human affairs there is one governing ideal at any one time. If the main bead be removed, the other beads will get loose and come off the string. They keep together on account of the main bead. In a carriage there may be many passengers, but the driver is only one. Similarly there may be many passions, feelings, ideas in a man's life, but there is one master passion that keeps together and marshals all others, directing them to one point. See Bhai Gurdas's *Var*, i. 15.

In the beginning people were actuated by a simple piety and led very temperate lives. There was no luxury of big houses or sumptuous food (Bhai Gurdas, *Var*, i.5). That was the Sat age or the golden period. " Then came the Treta period, when men were inspired with Might, and they practised continence and other austere actions" for conserving their strength. " In their hearts and souls was wrath, a poisonous fermentation; and kings made war and suffered in the conflict" (*Asa Chhant*, IV). That was the age of Rama the

hero and Lakshman the chaste, his brother. "When the Duapar age came, people became superstitious, and there appeared Krishna and his milkmaids. Penances were practised, sacrifices and charities were initiated, and religious ceremonies were performed to excess" (*ibid*). The last age is the dark age of Kali, when Truth has vanished and dark superstition, as described by Bhai Gurdas (*Var*, i. 18-21), reigns instead. Passions of envy and hatred are roused to the highest pitch, and there is no peace between man and man.

It is all right to devide time, as a matter of historical fact, according to the prevailing tendencies of character. But it is superstitious to believe that particular ages are ordained to exhibit particular virtues or evils. That would make men slaves of destiny, and there would remain no initiative in them to lift themselves out of the prevailing circumstance. The Guru considered all ages to be golden wherein God was loved, and all ages dark wherein there was no worship of the Name (*Sri Rag*, I, *ashtpadi* vii).

"In all ages the same sun shines and the same moon and stars rise over the same earth, which is swept by the same wind. Where is any room for

supposing that a particular age must play its part among men?"—*Ramkali*, I.

"*According to the true Guru the Perfect One* is the same through all ages" (*Basant*, I), and "whoever was saved in the ancient or the modern times, it was through the love and devotion of God."—*Sarang*, V.

"Out of the so-called Sat, Treta, and Duapar ages, the Kali age is the best, because in it one gets what one does and no one is prosecuted for another" (*Asa*, V), and because it is "the season for the praises of God."—*Asa Chhant*, IV.

2.

1. **White-robed**: refers to the Swan Avtar of God. "In the Sat age there was the Swan Avtar who taught that 'I am', and there was no other humbug."—Bhai Gurdas, *Var*, i. 5.

4. **That age**: Treta.

7. **The age of Yajur**: Duapar.

Chandrawal was a milkmaid of Brij. She was very obstinate in resisting the addresses of Krishna. Seeing that all his fluting and dancing went for nothing, he resorted to a stratagem in order to win her love.

8. **Brought the Elysian tree, etc :** Rukmani and Satbhaman were two beloved spouses of Krishna. Once Narad brought to him a flower of Krishna. Once Narad brought to him a flower of the Kalip tree—which grows in Paradise and fulfils all desires at demand—and asked him to give it to that wife who was his best beloved. Krishna gave it to Rukmani. Narad, according to his humour, went and told Satbhaman of it. She became jealous and asked Krishna to give her the same flower which had been given to her rival, or bring the tree itself to be planted in her palace. Krishna went to Indra's garden in Heaven and brought the tree for her. See the Bhagwat Puran (x), wherein other stories are also given of Krishna's playing and dancing in the company of milkmaids in the forest of Brindaban.

9-10. Compare :

" The Primal Being is now called Allah ; the turn of the Sheikhs has come.
The shrines of gods are taxed ; such has come to be the practice.
Ablution-pots, calls to prayer, five daily prayers, prayer-carpets are much in evidence ; and God appeares to be dressed in blue.
In every house men are addressed as " Mian ; even your language has been changed."—*Basant*, I, *ashtpadi* viii.

12. **Karma-lore,** distinctions of approved and disapproved actions according to the Vedic literature :

" In order to consider how to remove doubts about the appropriateness or otherwise of actions, we hear the Vedas and Puranas ; but the doubts still remain in the mind. Who will remove our pride ?"—*Gauri Bairagan* of Ravidas.

"Men ponder over the Vedas and Shastras to secure deliverance ; but superior to all the religious ceremonies and observances taught therein is the practice of the Name."—*Asa*, V.

" Those who are attached to the three qualities, of Peace, Desire, and Passion, have to be born and die again and again. All the four Vedas talk of the phenomenal nature and describe the three conditions. But the fourth unconditioned state is known from the true Guru. By loving God and serving the Guru man is saved, and does not have again to be born or die. Everybody talks of the four objectives, and the Simritis and the Shastras, with the Pundits who read them, do the same. But without the Guru the meaning of the true objective is not found. The object of salvation is obtained from the love of God."—*Gauri*, I.

13-14. *Cf:*

"O my soul, how can you be saved without love."—*Sri Rag*, I, *ashtpadi* xi.

"He is not obtainable by intellect, study, or great cleverness; whom the heart desires is obtained by love."—*Asa*, I, *Chhant* i.

"Hear ye all, I declare this truth that only those who practise love obtain the Lord."—*Swayyas*, X, 9.

XIV

1.

1. **The simmal tree,** the *Bombax heptaphyllum*, whose fruits are useless and wood brittle. In the Sikh Scriptures a proud and worthless man is often compared to this tree. See *Suhi*, I *ghar* 6.

2.

3. **Make out jewels of iron**: Compare 'to make the worse appear the better reason', with which Socrates was charged by his enemies. See his *Apology*, ii and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, ii 113.

4. The Gayatri triplet, containing three *padas*, is repeated as a mantra by orthodox Hindus at daybreak, noon, and evening. Mr. Macauliffe translates it as follows; "Oam, earth and air and sky, let us meditate on that excellent sun the bright god, which stimulates our intellects."

XV

4.

Disgraces his beard : commits lustful acts unbecoming his age or his outward respectability.

XVI

1.

1. **Cow-dung,** with which Hindus smeared their cooking places in order to make them purified.

2. **Malechhas :** those whose desires are filthy; a contemptuous term used by Hindus for Mohammedans whom they considered untouchables.

2.

1. **Nimaz :** the Mohammedan daily prayer.

3. **In such people's houses,** where the Brahmins officiate at charity dinners.

13. **The unutterable words :** the Quranic formula, pronounced by Mohammedan butchers while killing a goat for Hindus, was in Arabic and was therefore considered unutterable by Hindus.

14. **Cooking squares :** The Guru condemned this custom ; "See that you do not forget the true word

that nobody is polluted in cooking squares; that all cooking squares are false; only God is true."—*Maru-ki-Var*, III.

XVII

1.

The reference is to the ceremony of *shradh*, which consists of offerings of choice dishes and libations of water made through Brahmins to the manes of dead ancestors. There are three kinds of *shradh*: that performed on the anniversary day of the death of an ancestor; that performed on some auspicious day, as the full-moon day or the day of the darkest night; and that performed during the dark half of the month of Assuj, about September-October. The Gurus abolished this ceremony and ordered that when a relation dies we should sing God's praises:

"The soul has flown off and is groping its way. He came, he died, and has departed, leaving only a name. After him they offer food on leaves and call for crows. Nanak, they are perverse and love darkness. Without a Guru the world is lost."—*Var Majh*, I, i. 2.

"God is my barley rolls and leafy platters, the Creator's Name the true obsequies. Here and hereafter, in the past and the future, that is my support."—*Asa*, I.

Sunder, while describing the death scene of his great-grandfather, Guru Amar Das, says, in his *Sadd*, 5 :

'In the end the Guru said, 'After my death you should perform unalloyed sacred music.' '

See also Kabir, *Gauri Bairagan*, 45.

XVIII

1-2.

Compare *Gauri*, III, *ashtpadi* i ; and Kabir's *Gauri Guareri, ashtpadi* xli.

xviii.

5. **The nine treasures** : all the treasures. In the Hindu books all wealth is divided into nine categories.

XIX

xix.

5. The teaching is that we should not be rude to anybody. If the person we talk to is inferior in intelligence, we should not show off our superiority to him, because that would be insulting to his humanity and unbecoming our own education ; and if he is a fool, we should not at all engage in debate with him. " Discussing anything with a good man may produce public good ; while with a fool you only do violence to yourselves. By continuing to talk with him the

evil will increase, but without any talking on your part what can the poor fellow do?"—Kabir's *Gaund*. A fool, according to Bhai Gurdas, is one who does not know how to talk, is perverse, is incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong and friend and foe; and we should therefore avoid talking with him (*Var* xxxii 14-20).

XX

1.

"Only do not talk rudely to anybody, all have got the true Beloved in them. Distress no man's heart; each heart is like a priceless jewel."—Farid's *shlok* 129.

I. *Cf.* "The pride of thy heart mars thy beauty."—*Asa*, V.

XXIII

1.

Here as well as in the previous two stanzas with their staves is defined the attitude which the servant of God has to adopt towards his Master. The ideal of loving service is to exert ourselves in the way of God to win His pleasure, by bringing about harmony between God's Will and our own. Sometimes men attempt to do it by trying to subject God's Will to their own, or by trying to purchase it by doing something good or

devotional. This is lowering God to our own level, and strikes at the very root of all morality. God is the highest and the holiest Being, and true worship is to serve Him disinterestedly and to invite all grifts, not as rewards for our own virtues, but as blessings granted out of His free grace.

XXIV

2.

In the beginning God brought out of Himself the material for making the earth; and, as His Spirit went on working on it, its different scattered elements began to gather, until it acquired a definite shape and found its proper place among the planets of the solar system. In it there appeared living beings occupying their proper positions among themselves and living upto a period fixed by God, who, though so great, is yet not unmindful of a single creature's life or death.

xxiv.

[Corrected]: This note is found at the end of all the Odes in the Holy Granth, excepting a few. One of the latter has got at its end the words '*may be corrected,*' which are a direction of Guru Arjan to Bhai Gurdas, his amanuensis, to revise and correct the spelling and arrangement of portions indicated by comparing them with the originals.

SOME REVIEWS

ON

THE JAPJI OR GURU NANAK'S MEDITATIONS

AND

THE GROWTH OF RESPONSIBILITY IN SIKHISM

BY

Professor Teja Singh, M.A., of the Khalsa College, Amritsar.

The two little books by Professor Teja Singh are welcome as from a Sikh thinker. Both are very readable and give an excellent idea of what the Sikh faith is at its root. The translation of the *Japji* is done in fine style preserving as far as may be the spirit of the original. As a book of meditations the work would prove of great interest to students of comparative religion. It is a pity that few students outside the Punjab have thought of studying Sikhism. Hence Professor Teja Singh's works deserve wider publicity. The message of Guru Nanak would appeal to the best in Indian readers, and even in his original language should present no special difficulty. It is the message of India through all her millenia of history—to whichever province, to whichever age the messenger came—the message of the brotherhood of humanity and of salvation through service.

The second tract is readable but brief history of the faith. The work of each one of the ten Gurus is surveyed, and special point is made of the conditions under which each worked and moulded the destinies of the faith. The author has touched the real point of Sikhism when he says that "the Sikh is essentially a disciple" and that "his religion, therefore, is best understood when we regard it as a life, a discipline, and not a history or philosophy." A remarkable history is here presented of the inward evolution of a great movement. In the new India of to-morrow the Sikh has a part to play even greater than in the past—glorious as it has been—and it behoves all thinking non-Sikhs to-day to appreciate the true inwardness of this faith and to consider what treasures it has to bring to the common stock of India's future greatness.

The Calcutta Review.

The Japji: This is a translation of the Sikh morning prayer. The rendering is as liberal as is consistent with maintaining the true spirit of the poem, the style of the original being so elliptical and the thought so deep that a too literal translation would have been defective. The writer has attempted to supply a connecting link of thought between the apparently disconnected passages of the original. The copious notes at the end help to elucidate the difficult points and explain some of the fundamental principles of Sikh thought.

The Growth of Responsibility in Sikhism by the same author is a kind of introduction to Sikh history. The

writer tries in it to trace the evolution of the Khalsa in the hands of the ten successive Gurus. It shows the futility of taking the events of Sikh history incoherently and making invidious distinctions about the conduct of different Gurus. Here history is presented in its true light as the crystallization of a nation's spirit to be realized as a unity. It is a handy outline of the main currents of Sikh history and will prove useful, not only to the general public, but also to History students in the Punjab and Calcutta Universities who have got Sikh history as a part of their course.

The Tribune,

———

The Growth of Responsibility in Sikhism: This is an exceedingly useful brochure on what may be called the moral history of the Sikhs.

Journal of Indian History Allahabad.

———

Guru Nanak's Meditations: Mr. Teja Singh, Professor of the Khalsa College of Amritsar, has done a great service to the English-reading non-Punjabi public by initiating it into the teachings of Guru Nanak.

The Mahratta.

OTHER BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

1. Japji, or the Meditations of Guru Nanak.
2. Sukhmani, or The Psalm of Peace, by Guru Arjun (published by Oxford University Press).
3. Growth of Responsibility in Sikhism.
4. A Short History of the Sikhs, by Teja Singh and Ganda Singh (Longmans).
5. Sikhism: Its Ideals and Institutions (Longmans).
6. Highroads of Sikh History, Bks. I, II & III (Longmans).
7. Gurdwara Reform Movement.
8. The Religion of the Sikh Gurus.
9. Essays in Sikhism.

1959